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AUTHOR	Forster, Margaret; Masters, Geoff
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ABSTRACT

Performance assessment is the assessment of students engaged in an activity. It is the on-the-spot evaluation of a performance, behavior, or interaction. Ordinarily, there is no concrete product that can be judged at a later date. In Developmental Assessment, teachers monitor student progress against a preconstructed map of developing skills, knowledge, and understanding. Performance assessment can be used in developmental assessment. The usefulness and quality of information obtained from observations of student performance can be improved by focusing observations on important learning outcomes and recording the observations systematically. Performance assessment events are planned assessment occasions for the observation of students engaged in an activity. The teacher selects a context for the assessment and decides on a method for judging student performance. Several ways of recording observations are described, and the use of these observations in constructing the student's progress map is outlined. It is sometimes important that assessments of student performance be comparable from student to student, assessor to assessor, or school to school. In high-stakes settings, student performance may have important consequences, and fairness dictates the need for comparability. When comparability matters, special attention must be given to planning performance assessments, judging them, and summarizing and reporting achievement. As in other kinds of assessment, teachers developing performance assessments must take their purposes, methods, and ways to estimate student progress into account. Examples of performance assessment problems and a summary of the performance assessment design process are given. A number of illustrations highlight important points. (SLD)